The Semaphore

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Grant Avenue Denizens

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SAVING THE COLOMBO BUILDING: THE UNTOLD STORY

By: Aaron Peskin

Next year marks a century since San Francisco financier Ellie Drexler built the Colombo Bldg. at 1 Columbus Ave. This beaux arts-style, triangular building is considered the Gateway to North Beach and is the demarcation line between the downtown's high-rises to the south and the human scale, historic neighborhoods of Jackson Square, Chinatown and North Beach to the north. This two-story edifice and the block it sits on have been ground zero for contentious battles and lawsuits dating back to the infamous eviction battle at the International Hotel some 35 years ago.

Like the I-Hotel, the wrecking ball has repeatedly threatened the Colombo Bldg. Unlike the I-Hotel, however, it miraculously survived in spite of proposals for its demolition and new high-rise construction on the site approved in the 1980s and 1990s.

Now, on the eve of its 100th birthday, the Colombo Bldg. enjoys permanent protections and has been lovingly restored to its historic splendor as designed by the Reid Bros., the architects who designed the Fairmont Hotel and many other iconic San Francisco buildings. The second floor once again houses numerous offices, while the ground floor is full of thriving, small local businesses that are worth a visit.

The Colombo Bldg. sits on the southeast corner of Assessor's Block 195, bounded by Washington, Kearny and Jackson streets and Columbus Avenue, kitty corner from the Transamerica Pyramid. The three-story International Hotel, which was the center of San Francisco's once vibrant Manilatown, occupied the northwest corner of this block at Kearny and Jackson.

In 1968, the I-Hotel was purchased by Milton Meyer and Co., headed by San Francisco businessman Walter Shorenstein, who secured a demolition permit and ordered the evictions of the 196 tenants, mostly elderly Filipinos. They had less than three months to get out. "We deeply regret having to disrupt the lives of these good people," Shorenstein said as the eviction notices went out. The "Fight to Save the I-Hotel" was on! Five years later, tired of bad press and extensive community opposition, Shorenstein sold the I-Hotel to the Four Seas Investment Corp., owned by Thai liquor magnate Supasit Mahaguna, for $850,000. After several years of lawsuits and community protests, Superior Court Judge Ira Brown ordered the evictions. In the early hours of Aug. 4, 1977, some 300 San Francisco sheriff's deputies and police officers on horseback arrived to storm the 3,000 person-strong group of community activists that had assembled to stop the evictions.

The last of the elderly tenants were dragged from the building in the pre-dawn hours of that shameful day in San Francisco's history. A few years later, the historic I-Hotel was demolished and the site sat vacant for the next quarter of a century. (Ironically, a 105-unit, low-income senior housing complex occupies the site today.)

What few noticed was that the Four Seas Corp., also had purchased the Colombo Bldg., which it hoped to merge with the I-Hotel parcel for a mega-development. By the mid-1980s, the Four Seas obtained city approval to demolish the Colombo Bldg., and replace it with high-rise, market-rate condominium s on the condition that it build low-income housing on the I-Hotel site. That project was never built, and in 1997 Four Seas sold the Colombo Bldg., to City College of San Francisco as part of a site for its Chinatown/North Beach campus.

Once again, community activists banded together to protect the neighborhood, ultimately challenging City College in court. As the 20th century was coming to a close, the San Francisco Examiner reported on June 7, 1999 the good news that, "Pressured by preservationists, a lawsuit and City Hall, City College of San Francisco officials have backed off plans to demolish the historic Colombo Bldg., …"

The settlement of the lawsuit between Friends of the Colombo Bldg. and City College required that the Colombo Bldg. be preserved, restored and rehabilitated. Now, more than a decade later, the work is complete just as the building celebrates its 100-year birthday. On Aug. 23, 2002, the Board of Supervisors designated it as San Francisco Landmark No. 237. It was also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. San Francisco Architectural Heritage, a nonprofit preservation organization, now holds a Historic Preservation Easement for the Colombo Bldg., to preserve in perpetuity its architectural, historic and cultural values. City College sold the building to one of its former tenants, Luigi Barassi, who has painstaking restored the building inside and out.

The story ended well for City College, too, which purchased the parking lot on Kearny and Washington where the new Chinatown/North Beach campus will open next year.

I hope we'll all celebrate the Colombo Bldg.'s centennial.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Jon Golinger

> *"Telegraph Hill is more than a matter of views; it is a way of life."*
>
> *"San Francisco's Telegraph Hill" by David F. Myrick*

When my phone rang early one morning last month with a call from a Chronicle reporter inquiring about reports of big boulders that had just rolled down the north face of Telegraph Hill, I put down my coffee cup and did two things.

First, I walked out my door and around the Hill to see for myself what had happened, whether anyone was in danger and what could be done. After determining that a rain-induced rockslide had crushed a car, but thankfully not injured anyone or damaged any homes, I knew I would need to provide some context about this episode to the media and interested others. From my decade on the Hill, I knew that this slide was not a one-time occurrence, but just the latest consequence of the aggressive — and at times illegal — blasting of Telegraph Hill more than a century ago. I needed to know more, however, to be able to explain that this wasn't a random incident, but just the latest chapter in the still-unfolding story of Telegraph Hill.

To be able to tell that story well, I knew I needed to do a second thing. I headed straight to my bookshelf and pulled down the quintessential source for the history of Telegraph Hill: David Myrick's invaluable treasure, "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill." Chapter 7, "The Gray Brothers, Incredible Quarrymen," told me what I needed to know about the way the Hill was made vulnerable by George Freeman Gray and Harry Nathaniel Gray. Myrick wrote that "the annihilation of Telegraph Hill" through massive dynamite blasting was their publicly declared goal. "Of all the scoundrels in San Francisco who persistently flouted the law, the Gray brothers were perhaps the worst," he wrote. "Their aggressive tactics caused much suffering to innocent parties, and it was only after two murders that their freewheeling operation was closed down. They were the incredible quarrymen."

Just days later, it was with an especially heavy heart that I learned Myrick had passed away recently at the age of 93. While I never met him, Myrick's Telegraph Hill book, packed with first-person stories, forgotten tales and block-by-block character sketches of the neighborhood he lived in for nearly 30 years, gave me — and all of us who love the Hill — a gift for which we will be forever grateful. Julie Christensen provides a warm tribute to David Myrick in this issue of The Semaphore, and THD will honor him more later this year. I know that as an author, more than anything Myrick would be pleased to know that his labor of love, "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill," will be read by generations to come and referenced regularly by all of us who hunger for more information about this unique and colorful place called Telegraph Hill. Thank you, David.

I have another important note of thanks. On behalf of THD's Board and membership, I want to thank *Semaphore* Editor Art Peterson for his outstanding eight years of service in that vital role. This spring, Art will be stepping down as editor of *The Semaphore* so that he and Carol will be free to travel the world and follow other pursuits that a quarterly schedule of producing a premier neighborhood quarterly publication does not allow. We would certainly prefer not to say farewell to Art, but we have begun interviewing candidates to take on the important *Semaphore* editor's role later this year. Art's superior writing and editing skills have set an incredibly high bar, turning *The Semaphore* into a "must-read," not just for all of us in the neighborhood, but for public officials, community leaders and opinion-makers across the city who want to know what is happening in North Beach and on Telegraph Hill. Instead of saying goodbye, on behalf of THD I will say something else: Mr. Editor — job well done. *Bon voyage.*

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DAVID MYRICK — THE TRIBUNE OF TELEGRAPH HILL

By Julie Christensen

David Myrick, who many on the Hill knew as an early, avid member of THD and even more remember as the author of the book "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill," died late last September at the age of 93.

David was a Santa Barbara boy, who came to work in San Francisco as a financial officer in the office of the president of Southern Pacific (Railroad) Co. David's upbringing suggested decorum – his father founded the Santa Barbara National Bank and David graduated from college as a business major. He toiled at S.P. for nearly three decades, researching mergers and acquisitions, writing letters to stockholders and representing the company before various commissions.

In 1952, however, David decided to move to Telegraph Hill. He found an apartment on the Filbert Steps where Grace Marchant, who converted the Filbert Steps from trash dump to garden, was clearing debris, planting the hillside and holding impromptu concerts on her front porch. Dorothy Erskine, instrumental in the founding of SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research) and BCDC (the Bay Conservation and Development Commission), was spearheading tree-planting efforts on the Hill. George Rockrise, who had co-founded ROMA Design after a stint with famed landscape designer Thomas Church, was working with others to prevent high-rise development in the neighborhood. Friedel Klussman was deep in her struggles to prevent the dismantling of the city's cable-car system. Movies were being filmed, all manner of parties were going on. David loved it all.

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers was organized in 1954. David agreed to serve on the board and then decided the group needed a newsletter, so he would beat out a couple of pages every few months and have them mimeographed for dissemination to the fledgling membership (dues $1 a year). Referred to only as "your correspondent," David wrote and edited the (pre-*Semaphore*) *Telegraph Hill Bulletin* through the mid-to-late-'50s.

David found time to write a couple of books on the history of Western railroads (the first of 17 books and more than 140 articles). He mentioned to his publishers that he'd love to write a book about Telegraph Hill, but they rejected his first manuscript, insisting that he cut it by half. David abbreviated every page and the final version, "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill," came out in 1972.

David returned to his Santa Barbara home in the early 1980s, but continued to share his love of history, penning books on Santa Barbara and Montecito and serving on various historical and civic boards. He maintained a connection to Telegraph Hill and its residents and issues. In the late 1990s, when the Pioneer Park Project was raising funds for renovation of the park around Coit Tower, David came to town to lend his voice to the effort. Telegraph Hill Dwellers President (but not yet supervisor) Aaron Peskin and Nancy Shanahan were enlisted to entertain David prior to the event. Their discussion led to the republication of David's Telegraph Hill book in 2001. When questioned about his stance on the North Beach Library, David sent letters in support of restoration of the Joe DiMaggio playground and a new library building.

People were drawn to David by his deep love of history, his patience for research and the joy he experienced in sharing those with others. He worked hard to understand how things once were, how they got that way and how they evolved to where they are now. His histories are thoughtful and comprehensive, but they are also literary time machines, propelling us backward to days and places and attitudes long gone. David was generous with his knowledge, his time, his heart and smile. We will long remember him as both chronicler and maker of the history of Telegraph Hill.

Myrick book signing

Author David Myrick signing books at the launch party for the reissued "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill," with Katherine Koelsch (left) and Jeanne Milligan (right). PHOTO BY ANN HALSTED

Want to know more? "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill" is on sale at City Lights books. Rozell and Peter Overmire did an oral history interview with David that can be read at the North Beach Library. Peter and Rozell also digitized David's early *Telegraph Hill Bulletins* along with many years of *The Semaphore*. They are online at THD.org.

Personal note:

There is a first-edition copy of "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill," with a dedication to Maggie Baylis by David Myrick, floating around the neighborhood that Maggie gave to me shortly before her death. If you see it, please recall that it belongs to and means a great deal to me. I would dearly love to have it back.

FROM THE DESK OF ***SUPERVISOR CHIU***

It's already been a busy 2012 around City Hall, and I am excited to share with you some of the things we have been working on.

Landslide! On the morning of January 23, several large boulders slid down Telegraph Hill near Lombard and Montgomery streets. Luckily, no one was hurt, but a parked car was crushed. The landslide was a sobering reminder that we live in a city with unique topography and challenges from Mother Nature. I am working with the Recreation and Park Department and the Department of Public Works to find out what we can do to prevent similar occurrences.

Breaking Ground: First-in-the-Nation Legislation. Recently, I announced two first-in-the nation legislative proposals: **Benefit corporations** and the **right to civil counsel**.

Benefit Corporations. The first measure requires the city to provide contract bid preferences to benefit corporations. "B Corps" are a new class of corporations recently authorized by the state of California to create a general benefit for society as well as for shareholders. Our city is known as an international leader in sustainability, economic innovation and social entrepreneurship and my proposal reaffirms this leadership. We anticipate that the Board of Supervisors will vote on the legislation in early March.

Right to Civil Counsel. At the end of last year, I joined with leaders in the San Francisco legal community in calling for a local judicial system that provides representation to residents involved in civil proceedings that could deny basic human needs such as child custody, shelter or health. The legislation I introduced declares San Francisco the first "Right to Civil Counsel City" and authorizes a one-year Right to Counsel Pilot Program that will be a partnership between the city, the courts and the private legal community. The cost of the pilot program would be borne by the private legal community. I am grateful to the leadership of the Bar Association of San Francisco and legal aid organizations for their participation in this groundbreaking proposal. The Board of Supervisors' Rules Committee will consider the legislation on Thursday, February 16.

Moving to Amend. On January 31, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted for my resolution to support a nationwide movement asking for a constitutional amendment related to the rights of corporations in relation to campaigns and elections. In January 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Citizens United, ruled in favor of unlimited corporate spending to influence elections and policy decisions, which granted corporations the same free speech protections as people. More than 35 cities and states have introduced similar measures to call on Congress to limit corporate influence, and members of Congress have proposed amendments to the Constitution to do so. Most recently, the city councils in Los Angeles and New York City passed almost identical resolutions.

A New Waterfront Playground. In recent years, the neighborhoods along the northeastern waterfront have been changing considerably, including becoming the home of more families with young children. Unfortunately, these neighborhoods have very few recreational opportunities. The nearest public playground facilities are a bus ride or long walk away, a challenge for those with young children. I have been collaborating with Friends of the Waterfront Playground that has worked for more than a year locating, designing and fundraising for a new waterfront public playground. After residents and the Recreation and Park Department identified Sue Bierman Park as a potential location, I authored an ordinance that would allow for the building of playground structures there. At the end of last year, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved this legislation, opening the doors for the next phase of the playground's planning. For more details about the plan, you can e-mail Lisa Beyer at lisa.beyer@sfgov.org.

Jefferson Street Improvements. On January 25, the Planning Department held a community meeting to present the plans for Jefferson Street, which is at the heart of Fisherman's Wharf and has more than 10 million visitors a year. The proposal, which I have strongly supported, is the result of a lengthy public engagement process for the Fisherman's Wharf Public Realm Plan. The new design strengthens Jefferson Street's appeal by prioritizing the quality of the pedestrian environment, while making cycling safer and more comfortable. Wider sidewalks, new pedestrian lighting, attractive paving and expanded cafe seating will result in a more beautiful and memorable street that strengthens the identity of Fisherman's Wharf. The goal is to have two blocks, between Hyde and Jones streets, built in time for the America's Cup in 2013, although funding is still being sought for construction.

Upcoming Meeting on Project. 8 Washington Luxury High-Rise Condo Project. I have heard numerous opinions, questions and concerns about this project from many constituents. The Planning Commission and the Recreation and Park Department are scheduled to jointly consider this project on Thursday, February 23; if interested, please come and participate in the public discussion.

America's Cup. After removing the possibility of a floating JumboTron in Aquatic Park at my request, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to approve the project's Environmental Impact Report. This month, the board will take a very close look at the project's development agreement, which sets the terms between the city and the America's Cup Event Authority.

continued on page 4

THE OLD SPAGHETTI FACTORY: UNASSUMING AND SIGNIFICANT

By Katherine Petrin
This is the first in a series of articles on North Beach's landmark buildings.

Imported olive oil and cheese warehouse, seltzer water bottling plant, cabaret, art gallery and restauant — how many lives may a building have? Consider this question as you pass by San Francisco Landmark No. 127 at 478 Green Street.

Within North Beach there are a number of designated landmark buildings and sites. Some of these are quite well-known and easily recognizable, such as Coit Tower, St. Francis of Assisi Church and Washington Square. Because buildings, objects and sites can be landmarked for historic significance or other reasons, not only for impressive architecture, the landmark status of an unassuming building might come as a surprise to some readers. One such building is the Old Spaghetti

Interior of Old Spaghetti Factory, c. 1950s
PHOTO: COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ROOM, SF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Factory, a former industrial structure at 478 Green St., between Grant and Kearny, San Francisco Landmark No. 127. The building is currently occupied by Bocce Café and Maykadeh restaurant.

The construction date of this building can be traced to the immediate post-earthquake and fire era. Its first owners, the Granucci Bros., were importers of olive oil and cheese. In 1911, it operated as a seltzer water bottling plant. Later, Baccigalupi, Casaretto & Demartini, proprietors of the Italian-American Pasta Co., operated a pasta factory there from 1912 until 1955.

Built by contractors Saraille and Lagomarsino, this three-story building was built as a factory and warehouse. It was not architect designed. The utilitarian, wood-frame structure measures 48 feet in height, has horizontal wood siding, and 4-over-4 double-hung windows. As an industrial building, it was built for function without ornamental detail typical of the era or even a cornice. Unlike all other buildings on the block and most in the neighborhood, the Old Spaghetti Factory building is detached, set apart from neighboring buildings with open passages on the east and west sides. Manufacturing facilities were often built as standalone structures to facilitate access and the delivery and shipping of materials and goods. Of greater importance, within a predominantly residential neighborhood, the increased risk of fire in industrial settings and the fear of it spreading to adjacent structures meant that industrial buildings were often detached.

In the 1950s, a major fire occurred in the pasta factory. It was renovated and sitting vacant when entrepreneur Frederick Walter Kuh saw it in 1956. Freddie, a Chicago native and former resident of Paris, was then a waiter and bartender at the Purple Onion. He jumped at the chance to take over the raw space for a rent of $300 a month. Within the former industrial facility, Freddie opened the Old Spaghetti Factory and Excelsior Coffee House, launching a new and colorful chapter in the building's history.

Freddie referred to himself as a "Bohemian businessman." His operation — cafe, restaurant, theater-cabaret and art gallery — was a "smash" from the day it opened, according to newspaper accounts. Also inside was the "Kuh Aud.," an auditorium or open space for cabaret and musical performances, and the adjoining Flamenco Theater, a replica of an Andalusian café that operated for more than 20 years as a showcase for Flamenco dance, song and guitar.

A 1979 article in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle quoted former employee Becky Jenkins as saying that Freddie was sharp at spotting talent and good people. He made the Factory into a haven for homosexuals in the days before there was a gay rights movement. Freddie thrived in the outrageous environment that was the Old Spaghetti Factory, creating a place that was more of an "orphanage commune" than a restaurant. Some of Freddie's loyal staff were archly referred to as "otherwise unemployable."

The Factory was a true original, appreciated for its eclectic décor, Bohemian clientele, affordable pasta fare, live entertainment, funky vibe and high-spirited staff. The place was furnished with items from Fred's personal collection of Victoriana, random kitsch, architectural castoffs and paintings and sculpture done by friends. Musicians who played at the Old Spaghetti Factory

Old Spaghetti Factory courtyard, c. 1950s
PHOTO: COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ROOM, SF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Former site of Old Spaghetti Factory today.
PHOTO: JULIE JAYCOX

included Arlo Guthrie, the Congress of Wonders, Dino Valente, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.

The Factory survived until 1984, the year Freddie sold the business. The memorabilia and furnishings of the Old Spaghetti Factory were offered through an onsite auction by Butterfield's the same year. From 1956 through 1984, the Old Spaghetti Factory was North Beach's hub of artistic activity, opera, flamenco and cabaret, attracting artists and writers, neighborhood folks, Bohemians and Beats. (And, yes, a film has been made. Look for the next screening of "The Old Spaghetti Factory" (2009) by filmmakers William Farley, Mal Sharpe and Sandra Sharpe.)

It was designated San Francisco Landmark No. 127 in 1981 on the basis of its significance as a cultural and social center in North Beach. The landmark case report further stated that "the Beatnik era was born in the district and its leaders very quickly associated themselves with the Spaghetti Factory; Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg in poetry and Kerouac in prose." Other notable individuals from the arts who have been associated with the Old Spaghetti Factory are photographer Jerry Burchard, the Kingston Trio, flamenco dancer Cruz Luna, Richard Brautigan and Robin Williams, to name a few.

The Old Spaghetti Factory was also considered to be significant as a successful example of an adaptively reused building, converted from industrial use to a cafe, cabaret and restaurant. During the designation process, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board member Jean Kortum said, "There is hardly anyplace more indigenous to the culture of North Beach than a pasta factory."

Supervisor Chiu *continued from page 3*

Action is expected at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, February 28.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact my office with your questions, requests and concerns. Best wishes for a great 2012!

THD Oral History Needs Stories and Volunteers

Do you know someone whose story should be told? Are you interested in the narratives of North Beach and Telegraph Hill? Do you want to tell your story? If so, then the Oral History committee is looking for volunteers to seek out stories that capture the lives that have enriched and contributed to our sense of place, culture and identity. We would be especially delighted if you shared stories that contribute to our varied cultural, ethnic, economic, spiritual and gendered heritage. Please contact Carlo Arreglo of the THD Oral History Project at auntiestrophe@gmail.com

WE ALL NEED NEXT VILLAGE

By Sarah Noyes
NEXT Director

NEXT Village provides opportunity — opportunity to become even more involved in our community, to get assistance when we need it, to offer assistance when we can and to make new friends. There are myriad ways for all of us to become involved in the organization. We see the value of NEXT Neighbors, our volunteer-first model, when Christine, a new member of NEXT Village, helps organize events and recruits her friends to join NEXT Village; when Sidney takes his passion for film and organizes a monthly Film Salon; and when the 14-person volunteer board works to ensure the success and longevity of the organization. These instances are a snapshot of what has been happening at NEXT Village since the organizations' inception in 2009. A primary commitment of NEXT Village is to provide seniors with the opportunity to age in their homes. The organization helps members access and coordiante social services and arranges transportation and assistance with medic al appointments, errands and social, cultural and physical activitise. NEXT provides advocacy services and collaborates with other groups serving adult needs. Our offerings include a rich variety of social events ranging from quarterly community events to small interest-based groups such as Sid's Film Salon.

In addition to new members, NEXT Village is recruiting volunteers, committee members and board members. Please contact Jonee Levy — jlevy@nextvillagesf.org for additional information. Visit our website at www.nextvillagesf.org to learn more about our services and see our calendar of events.

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BRIGHT IDEAS FOR MORE NORTH BEACH PARKLETS

By Carlo Arreglo

Last week, I was in the Castro to see a friend off. After our dinner, but *sans* dessert, we took a post-prandial stroll and happened upon a crème brulee food truck. The very qualities that make food trucks attractive, their mobility, potential to deliver deliciousness to foodie corners or food deserts, however, can be a detriment when faced with a quintessential urban predicament: where to sit? Fortunately, we were only a few steps from the solution: a parklet.

If Washington Square can be thought of as North Beach's outdoor living room, then our local parklets can be imagined as mini-rec rooms, dens or micro-parks that concentrate community. In our neck of the woods, we have three parklets proffered by Caffe Greco, Caffe Roma and Tony's Pizza. It's encouraging to see these spaces filled with people drawn to the vibrancy of our neighborhood and its offerings.

Where parklets are located depends very much on the applicant. According to the official "Request for Proposals for Temporary Sidewalk Extensions 'Parklets,'" eligible applicants include "Community Benefit Districts (CBDs), nonprofit institutions and community organizations and other applicants" as well as businesses. What about THD as an applicant and permit holder? Picture a THD community parklet partnered with a brick-and-mortar site that wasn't merely a square-footage extension for a food and drink purveyor, but a spatial and aesthetic respite open to all without the subtle social pressures of having to pay to sit in what are essentially free public spaces. Such a parklet might realize the intention of "providing aesthetic enhancements to the overall streetscape" so that people may "sit, relax and enjoy the city around them" and not just for the low price of a cup of coffee, but for the low price of free. But I digress.

While the spirit behind parklets is free public access for people to sit and relax in areas "where narrow sidewalks would otherwise preclude such activities" — repurposing the equivalent of one or two automobile spaces — the reality is that the cost structures of parklets may be prohibitive for nonprofits, community organizations and most other applicants, leaving storefront business owners as the realistic permit holders, who need to recoup both one-time and yearly fees. The application fees for the first year can reach $1,853.50 ($791 application fee, $650 for removal of up to two parking meters, $191.50 for site inspection, $221 for yearly renewal)! This doesn't even include the cost of materials, planning and design, maintenance and community outreach. This seems to be a lot to ask for most nonprofits, let alone our imaginary THD-sponsored parklet.

The city spells out very clear rules about how parklest can be used: "While parklets are sponsored by a private partner, all seating on a parklet must remain free and open for any member of the public to use. Any movable furniture used on the parklet must be different from any existing sidewalk furniture and table service, including placement of condiments, is not permitted."

Signage at Tony's announcing parklet as public space.
Photo by Julie Jaycox

A continuing concern regarding parklets is that they will attract the homeless. So far, complaints about the homeless taking over or sleeping at the three parklets on Stockton Street and Columbus Avenue have not been enough to warrant their removal. A call to Arizmendi Bakery in the Sunset, which sponsors one of my favorite parklets in the city, revealed that in six months, they had only one incident when a homeless person slept over. For this locale, the homeless situation has not been a concern. Of course, each neighborhood has its own texture and the urban ecosystem can change from street to street and block to block. Community input, regular maintenance and appropriate parklet design are crucial in shaping public access to parklets.

Cafe Greco parklet.
Photo by Julie Jaycox

More parklets can continue the revitalization of North Beach, perhaps on Upper Grant where there are narrow sidewalks that can fully realize the benefits of pavements-to-parklets. I can envision a space with hedges, rotating arts and crafts from Garfield School, quotations from Beats, Bohemians and residents etched into benches or planters with signage in English, Italian, Spanish and Chinese and a bike corral. Quite a parklet.

For further reading on parklets, see the RFP:
http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/images/Parklet_Call_for_Projects_110711.pdf
http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/index.htm
http://blog.sfgate.com/cityinsider/2012/01/22/plazas-and-parklets-the-latest-battleground-in-homeless-war/
http://www.sfbike.org/download/tubetimes/tt_Winter2012.pdf (see pages 6-9 and 11-12 on parklets and improving streetscapes.

For statistics on the impact of parklets on foot traffic, see the recently released study:
http://sfgreatstreets.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Detailed_Findings_NorthBeach.pdf

ART & CULTURE COMMITTEE

By Julie Jaycox

An ArtWalk Celebration to Thank Merchants & Sponsors

In conjunction with the Emerald Tablet's grand opening, on Friday, December 2, Art & Culture feted the sponsors and businesses of THD's 2011 ArtWalk. Because ArtWalk weekend helped increase business for participating North Beach businesses, we wanted to reinforce how the merchants and artists and art events are all interconnected and to celebrate their successes!

Besides an official thank you from a sequined-clad Art & Culture Chair (me!), Della Heywood and Lapo Guzzini, Emerald Tabletís proprietors, introduced themselves to the crowd with a curious and entertaining story about how they found their current location on Fresno Alley (which none of the rest of us even knew existed in a former afterschool learning center).

John Mola, a staunch North Beach history fan, was successful in rescuing a nearly demolished wall mural, painted by North Beach artist Vranas, from the now defunct Pulcinella restaurant on Vallejo. Emerald Tablet was asked to host the mural until it could be repaired and sent to an unknown future permanent home. Party goers were rewarded with the unveiling of a restored mural and movies of its previous life and rescue, along with emotional speeches by Mola and the artist telling of their joy at saving a piece of local Italian and art history.(See page 14)

Photo by Julie Jaycox

Food was provided by a variety of sources — Mola, who has kept Italian cooking in the limelight with his North Beach food tours, provided a smorgasbord of local fare; fresh, hot hors d'oeuvres were made for the occasion by Lidia Valledor and crew at Café Zoetrope; and a generous donation came from Canessa Gallery Artist Resource.

It was a great evening with new faces, North Beach history, art, and, of course, drunken revelry! Thanks to Della and Lapo for sharing their beautiful Emerald Tablet gallery space for the evening. Thanks to Art & Culture Committee members Sali Mour, Marylin Nichols and Carol Peterson for helping make it successful. You don't want to miss the next one!

Finally,

Looking for a new ArtWalk director:

After three years of running North Beach ArtWalk, I am ready for new horizons. Hopeful participants are already requesting information about the 2012 event, but someone is needed soon to take charge of the 5th annual ArtWalk program. Please e-mail artandculture@thd.org if you or anyone you know might like to take on this creative challenge.

GIMME SHELTER: A NEIGHBORHOOD VICTORY

By Ken Maley
of Friends of Washington Square

Several North Beach residents contacted Friends of Washington Square in late 2009 to bring to our attention the installation of one of the "new-wave" Muni shelters on Columbus Avenue between Union and Filbert streets. The new shelter was too large for the location, causing pedestrians to walk onto the park grounds, eroding the grass and soil. More important, the placement impeded pedestrian traffic, especially for the disabled.

Although the placement met the requirements for disabled mobility, it should have been clear to the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) and its partner Clear Channel that the placement was an encumbrance to all. Yet Clear Channel installed the shelter and MTA failed to review the placement, in turn failing to resolve an obvious problem.

Clear Channel suggested moving the shelter onto park grounds, which Friends of Washington Square objected to, citing the City Charter prohibition on erecting any nonrecreation facility on park grounds and the landmark status of the square, which prohibited any such steel and concrete structure.

Friends of Washington Square alerted MTA, but the agency did not respond to our concerns. Friends then contacted the Mayor's Office of Disability (MOD) in early 2010 and the Department of Public Works (DPW). It was DPW Acting Director Mohammed Nuru and MOD director Susan Mizner who assigned staff to work with city agencies to correct the problem.

Several solutions were considered: remove the shelter and replace it with one of the older styles more compatible with other street furniture around the square, combine the bus stop with the North Beach Library stop, or have no shelter at all. After prolonged meetings with MOD, MTA and DPW it was decided to replace the shelter with a smaller scale one, and to relocate it slightly to the south.

Now a year later, the smaller scale shelter has been installed and relocated at considerable cost both financially and of city staff time. An injury to a resident while trying to maneuver around the shelter could have been avoided. MTA should have properly inspected the proposed installation before it was installed, and Clear Channel should have been prevented from rushing to install the shelter despite the obvious problems it would create.

Before, above. PHOTO BY JULIE CHRISTENSEN After, below. PHOTO BY JULIE JAYCOX

FRED CRISP—NORTH BEACH BICYCLE BEAT

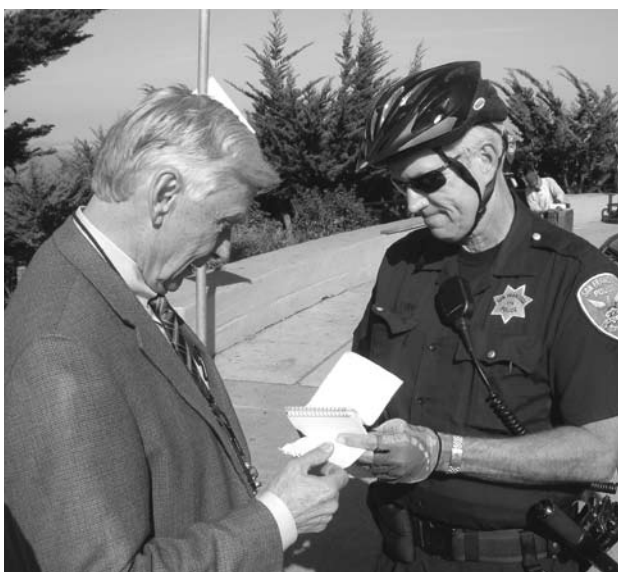
By Miriam Owen

One might wonder what the value could be of having a police officer patrolling on a bicycle. Fred Crisp has been on the beat out of North Beach's Central Police Station for 24 years. For the last three years, Fred has been on a bike. He is a friendly presence and he and I have always had wonderful exchanges whenever I see him around the neighborhood. I told him months ago that I wanted to do an interview for a story in *The Semaphore*. He responded, why not follow him around on a bike to see what a day in the life of a bicycle cop is like firsthand? I liked the idea a lot, but the thought of following Fred up Telegraph Hill or through the busy Columbus or Broadway corridors put me into reality check. Fred speaks of being in great cardio shape from his plain air job in one of the nation's top ten neighborhoods, but that's his body speaking, not mine! So one rainy day in January, we met at Cafe Capriccio for a sitdown interview.

Fred's workday starts at 8 a.m. Fellow bicycle cop Pete McLaughlin starts at 6 a.m. The first thing they do is wake up homeless people sleeping in doorways, parks and on benches. They know most of them by name and know their problems. Most are chronic alcoholics.

I asked Fred what are the most frequent problems that he deals with. He mentioned public drinking, drunkenness, panhandling, which is illegal within 20 feet of an ATM, fighting, littering, public urination, harassment of passersby, blocking a sidewalk, shoplifting and bizarre drunken or drug behavior.

Citations are issued, but are often burned, crumpled or torn up in front of Fred. If he finds a group visibly drinking, he issues a Section 21 citation that carries a fine of about $135. Because most of the tickets are ignored, they can add up. When an individual has 6-to-8 no-shows for court appearances, they can be taken into custody and detained at San Francisco County Jail. Fred expressed frustration with the "no consequences" aspect of this process. A court date is given; the subject is released and back on the streets all in the same day.



If a person who has been cited chooses to appear, they often go to the Homeless Coalition, which provides an attorney to assist them in court. According to Fred, these attorneys work to find loopholes or mistakes that were made that give their clients a way out of the citation. When I asked Fred the worst part of his job, he said seeing millions of dollars spent for social services for the homeless, while from his vantage, nothing changes and no one is helped.

I asked him about Pioneer Park at the top of Telegraph Hill. He said there are chronic homeless people there, mostly women. Gardeners complain about trash and human excrement. Fred answers such calls and goes to talk to the person or persons of interest. He tries offering the various services such as HOT, the homeless outreach team. Within 45 minutes the

continued on page 10

THE MURALS OF JEREMY FISH

By Miriam Owen

For a few years now, the murals of Jeremy Fish have been inflicting beauty on North Beach. With a degree in painting and a focus on screen printing, Jeremy's education and work experience has led to a career as a fine artist and commercial illustrator. He has found a balance between exhibiting his work in galleries and museums in the U.S. and internationally, while maintaining a local presence designing skateboards, T-shirts, vinyl toys, album covers, periodical illustrations, murals and sneakers. His artwork is mainly about storytelling and communication as told through a library of characters and symbols. He works to achieve a balance with his imagery somewhere between all things cute and creepy. Jeremy has lived and worked in San Francisco for the past 15 years. Here are some of his murals that are improving our lives.

Taxo.

Tony's Pizza.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Chris Stockton

DUES NOTICES

Some things just don't go away, such as taxes, flights of green parrots, barking sea lions on Pier 39 and THD dues notices. As outlined in the by-laws of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, "Annual Dues Notices" are sent to each member during the beginning of their anniversary month, which is the month when they joined THD. Most members respond to their first dues notice within 30 days, but some members don't. Those who do not respond are sent a follow-up notice 60 days later. For those who do not respond to the follow-up "Past Dues Notice," a "Final Dues Notice" is sent about 150 days later. Members who do not respond to the final notice within 30 days are removed from THD's membership records, mailing list for *The Semaphore* and e-mail directory.

The cost of having to make duplicate and triplicate mailings adds up and means there is less revenue for support of THD activities and *The Semaphore*. Please help by responding to your first dues notice. Please help even more by including a donation along with your annual dues.

On another note, if you think you might have a friend or neighbor who would like to join the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, please share *The Semaphore* with them and show them the application form on the last page. New members are always welcome!

Golden Boy Pizza.
Photos by Randy Dodson

PARKING AND TRANSIT REPORT

by Mike Sonn

As the new chairman of the Parking and Transit committee, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Mike and my wife and I live in North Beach, on Telegraph Hill.

The next few years will present our city, and especially our neighborhood, with many unique opportunities and challenges: from the Central Subway Project to the America's Cup to parklet expansion and the Columbus Avenue Project.

First and foremost on most THD members' minds when it comes to transit is the Central Subway Project. I personally share THD's opinion with regards to the subway, that the project is expensive and ineffective; but I also know that this is a very divisive issue with many people on both sides. As a group, I would like to instead turn our focus, subway or not, to Stockton Street and working together with other neighborhood groups to bring immediate upgrades to the existing transit system and improve the pedestrian experience throughout the densest neighborhoods on the west coast. I feel we can all agree the status quo on Stockton Street is unacceptable but we also can't wait until 2019, the current expected completion date for the Central Subway, for a solution.

The America's Cup will provide its own set of challenges for our neighborhood as we see thousands of spectators gather for the event. It is imperative that we work together to help mitigate the impacts and I look forward to hearing all suggestions and addressing any concerns.

As many of you have noticed, parklets are springing up throughout North Beach providing additional public spaces for the community to enjoy. This concept is an exciting opportunity to repurpose public right-of-way for people's enjoyment instead of solely as a conduit for moving and storing vehicles.

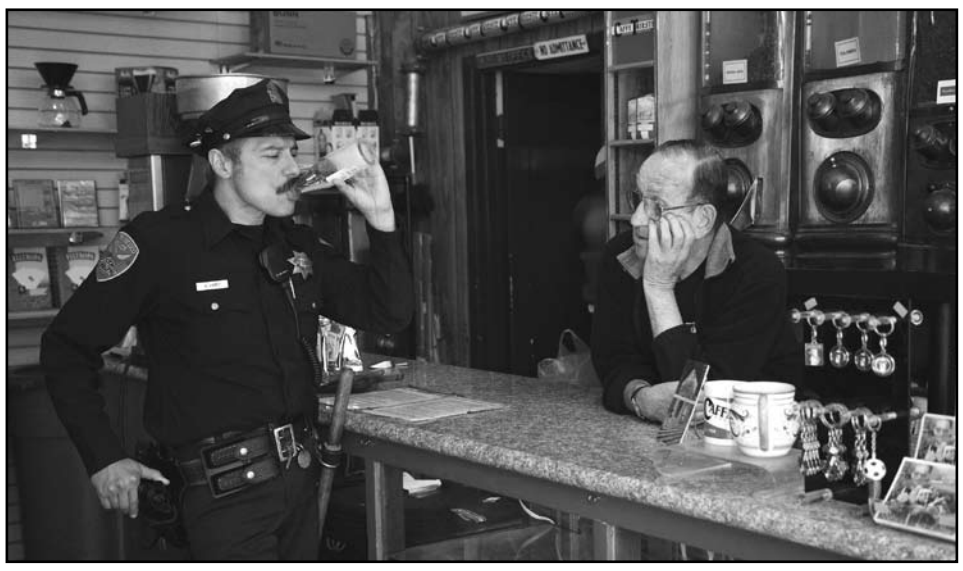
On this same note, I feel the Columbus Avenue Neighborhood Transportation Study, which was finalized in 2010, should be readdressed because the quality of our neighborhood depends on the quality of our public spaces and the ability to move around and within them.

THD was founded to protect the 39-Coit and I will work earnestly with the SFMTA to maintain current transit service in this difficult fiscal time and push for improved frequency and route expansion when the opportunity arises.

I would like to extend my hand to each of you to join me on the committee. These are all complicated but fascinating issues and the committee's, along with the neighborhood's, success depends on involvement and input from all of us.

VRANAS

Originally a Greek from Egypt, Vranas migrated from his home in Hong Kong to San Francisco in 1988. As a talented oil painter and muralist, Vranas has been commissioned to paint five murals in North Beach, including those in Viva Pizza, O'Reilley's, Nature's Gate, Pulcinella (no longer in business) and in one private residence. The Board of Supervisors awarded "The Certificate of Honor" to Vranas in October 2009 for these murals. He also established the San Francisco Realist Art Society from 1991-1993; a local art guild for painters and photographers to exhibit their work. A distinguished personality in the neighborhood cafés, Vranas is as likely to read your palm, tell you about Greek mythology or history, argue about politics, display his talents in Kenjitsu, draw a spectacular figure drawing or enjoy a stroll to view his beautiful murals.



3A42D (MARK ALVAREZ)

Mark Alvarez has been a foot beat cop at Central Station in North Beach for the last 12 years. In 1971, at age 12, Alvarez moved to San Francisco from Detroit and was quickly drawn to the coffee, Italian food, architecture and history of North Beach. As the regular beat cop in North Beach, Alvarez deals with people and their issues from all over the world and has befriended many of the locals. He is as likely to be seen at an art opening, poetry reading or at Caffé Trieste as a regular customer, as he is on the street in uniform as the friendly local cop.

ED BODEN

Ed Boden grew up in San Francisco and North Beach in particular. A former employee of Bank of America as a data processor, Boden has been working at Caffé Trieste Annex for the last 4 1/2 years. He is a strong supporter of the local artists and poets and has collected several of their works.

In 2011, photographer Barbara Hazen set out to capture images of Grant Avenue residents, café-goers, artists, shop and gallery owners. Her goal: "to tell a visual story of an unconventional community."

THE KING

Originally from Boston, Philip Hackett came to Sa
poetry and Beat movement after traveling in Euro
its poets. Although young Hackett demonstrated t
Ferlinghetti's book, "Coney Island of the Mind," h
him to pursue poetry. Philip now organizes and p
events including poetry, art and music around No
has been honored and translated around the wor

ROSEMARY

In 1983 at age 34, Rosemary Monno moved fro
poet all her life and has been influence by virtual
Monno also works as an artist with oil pastel, bu
lection of poetry is entitled, "Marseille."

GEORGE LONG

Feeling that he was living in a cultural wasteland in Canada, at age 24 George Long took his sister's advice to move to San Francisco in 1977 and follow his passion for jazz saxophone and photography and join the active Bohemian scene. Shortly after arriving in North Beach, however, Long was robbed of all of his belongings. His sister then gave him his first canvases and paints to give painting a try. At a poetry reading where an artist painted at the same time, poet Jack Hirschman remarked that although Long was very musically talented, his artwork was even better. This became the pivotal point for Long's transition from musician to artist. After various moves, Long returned to North Beach in 1985 and began painting in an abstract expressionist- style, and continues to exhibiting his work successfully.

BILL HASKELL

Bill Haskell, owner of ARIA on Grant Avenue since 1998, is in essence a "chasseur," French for hunter. For 15 years, Haskell has traveled regularly to Europe and France in particular and found hundreds of objects of unique beauty that have been, "hand touched" to resell at ARIA. His store is a collection of many one-of-a-kind objects of ephemeral quality, including old maps, globes, glass, architectural tools and objects, paper and school teaching charts. To walk into ARIA is like opening a hidden trunk in the attic, never knowing what you might discover and be moved by.

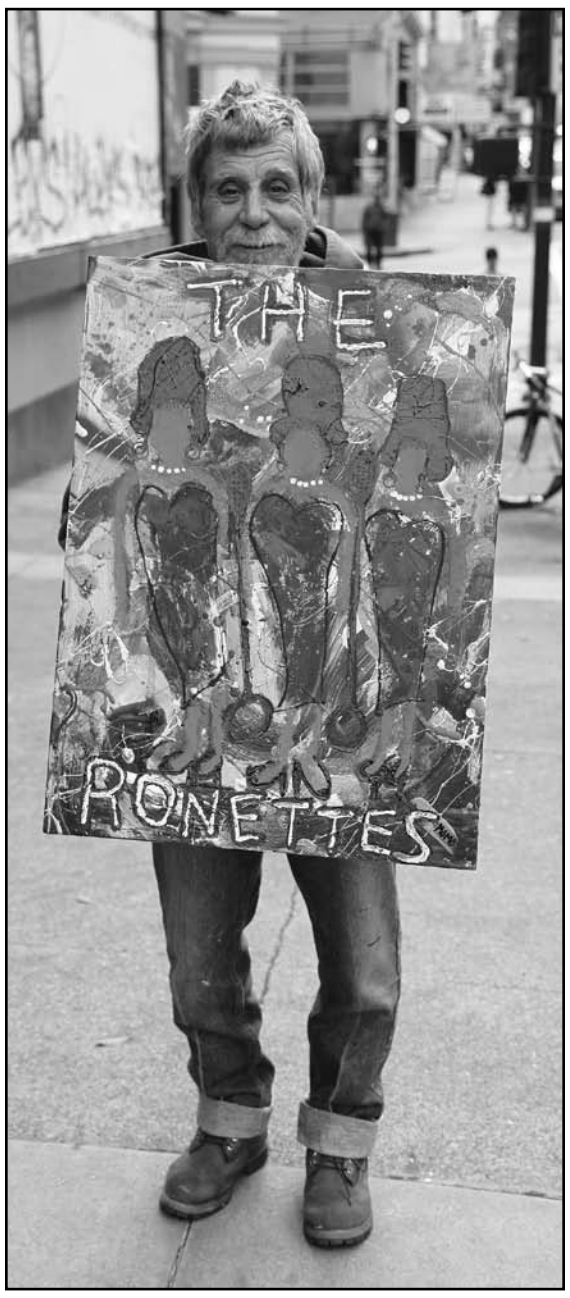
T AVENUE DENIZENS

OF POETRY

an Francisco in 1964 at age 20. Following the ope, he found his home in North Beach among alent in drawing and writing, reading Lawrence had a significant impression on him and directed produces regular poetry readings and advocates orth Beach. Hackett has published 20 books and rld as "The King of Poetry."

Y MONNO

m New York to San Francisco. She has been a lly all the writers and poets she has read or met. t remains primarily a poet. Her forthcoming col-



MOMO

Following the poet-Beatnik-hippie migration from the east coast, Momo, (Richard Anderson) arrived in San Francisco in 1973 at age 24. Momo was an elementary school teacher in the Haight-Ashbury district for 12 years and came regularly to North Beach to participate in poetry readings. Inspired by the art his students were experiencing, Momo started painting on his own and sold his work quickly. The success of this initial sale inspired him to continue further as an abstract painter. Considered the "outsider" artist in North Beach because he had no formal training, Momo only uses donated or found art materials for his work, which includes large abstract expressionism pieces as well as more child-like paintings and cartoons.

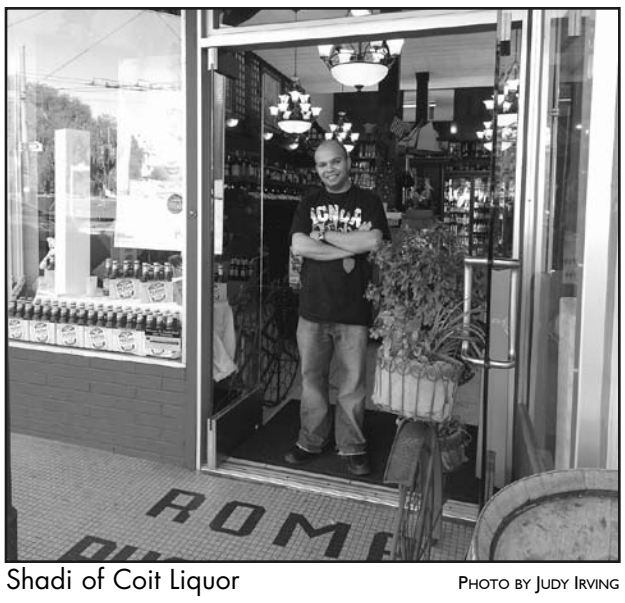
FANNY RENOIR

Fanny Renoir moved to San Francisco in 1984 from Arcadia, Calif., at age 43. Following the scene at the time as a feminist, hippie and poet, she was naturally drawn to North Beach. Renoir practiced a variety of artistic avenues from a very young age, but it was later in life that she fully embraced her interdisciplinary talents as a poet, artist and musician. James Joyce's book, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," as well as writings by Anais Nin, reenforced her desire to peruse her art and journal writing, which she continues to practice and exhibit regularly. As a vibrant, colorful figure and women of many talents, Fanny is a tireless liaison and supporter of other local artists and artisans of North Beach, a community that she adores.

DANNY MACCHIARINI

Since boyhood, Danny Macchiarini followed in the footsteps of his father Peter as a sculptor and jewelry maker. Peter Macchiarini was world renowned as a pioneer in American modernist sculpture and studio jewelry, beginning his work in the mid-1930s and ending only three months before his death in 2001. Opened in 1948, Macchiarini Creative Design on Grant Avenue is now the oldest, ongoing modernist design house combining a production studio and gallery in the United States. Danny took over the business in 1998 that now includes designs and work by his daughter Emma and other prominent metal artists. As an artist, Danny considers himself a Neo-Modernist; one who recognizes and embraces both the design and form structure of Modernists as well as the importance of influence and reaction of art seen by Post-Modernists. As a third generation shop on Grant Avenue, Macchiarini Creative Design is a jewel of North Beach history.

NORTH BEACH BUSINESS



Shadi of Coit Liquor PHOTO BY JUDY IRVING

Coit Liquors
585 Columbus
362-4444

By Judy Irving

Ever since he laid eyes on Coit Liquors 16 years ago — with its perfect corner location in the heart of North Beach across from Washington Square — Shadi Zughayar wanted to run that business. Meanwhile, he worked in the Mission and later on Broadway, but finally he got his wish. Driving along Columbus Avenue one day, he noticed that the shop was closed. The property manager told him that the owner had gone bankrupt. Undeterred, Shadi set about buying the liquor license and lining up inventory, and for the past two years, he hasn't looked back.

"When I come to work here, it feels like family," he said as I interviewed him between customers. "Whether it's locals or tourists, I love to help them out, make them happy." It's true: Coit Liquors has already donated Prosecco for THD's tree-planting party and a variety of red wines for our Christmas party. Shadi donates to school fundraisers and other nonprofits in the neighborhood as well.

I asked him if he could tell the difference between tourists and locals. "Oh, instantly. As soon as they walk in the door." How? "What they wear, how they speak, *whether* they speak, how they move — it's easy." Japanese tourists sometimes come in looking for Opus, a pricey wine that they can bring back home as a gift.

Shadi is especially proud of his pinot noir selection, including Kosta Browne from Sonoma, Beaux Freres from Oregon and Paul Hobbs from Napa. He likes to introduce people to small wineries such as Peter Michael (cabernet sauvignon), Turley (zinfandel) and Rombauer (chardonnay). His single malt scotches include Macallan (aged 10 to 30 years), Lagavulin, my own favorite 16-year-old single malt, and Bruichladdich from Islay.

Shadi was born in Valencia, Spain, of Palestinian parents, and spoke Spanish until he was 6. Then the family moved to Jordan for 11 years, where he learned Arabic. As a teenager, he moved to San Francisco and perfected his English. He and his wife Marie live in Benicia with their 2-year-old daughter, Najwa, and 1-year-old son, Ghaleb.

He loves to walk outside his shop and look across at the square and up at Coit Tower. When the "1,000 Naked Santas" swept through North Beach last Christmas and left the square a mess, Shadi got out with a garbage bag and helped pick up trash.

Stop in and say hello. He loves the neighborhood, knows his stuff and wants to help you find what you're looking for. It's not exactly a secret, but he doesn't advertise this little-known fact: Coit Liquors will home-deliver, if you live in the neighborhood.

Al's Attire PHOTO BY BARBARA HAZEN

Al's Attire

A native San Franciscan, Al Ribaya of the boutique Al's Attire on Upper Grant Avenue, discovered an appeal for North Beach at a very young age. After apprenticing as a shoemaker, Al found a niche for handmade shoes, and later made-to-order clothing, that focused on quality and individual style. Not his first venture in retail (Martini Mercantile and Taming of the Shoe were previous shops of his), Al's Attire has attracted repeat customers for decades for the practical, enduring quality of his shoes, hats and clothing. Focusing on outfitting people from head-to-toe in timeless vintage styles, Al has a quiet and attentive focus toward his customers and a talent for impeccable detail in his work.

Nico's Tacos
1310 Grant Ave.
652 6152

Nico's Tacos proprietor Leanne Lai is a Southern California transplant who moved to Berkeley to attend Cal. Falling in love with the Bay Area, she wanted to devise a plan to stay here. Her answer was Nico's, a warm Grant Avenue location that brings the Baja fish tacos that Leanne grew up with to San Francisco.

There is nothing generic about the tacos at Nico's.

Lianne Lai at Nico's Tacos PHOTO BY MIRIAM OWEN

Leanne says, "We put a Californian twist on taqueria classics and feature Asian Fusion specials. Our Big Pig Bacon Lover's Taco is amazing! And since the end of January we have featured Sake Sundays, pairing Japanese/Asian Fusion tacos with premium sakes. Then, on the last Sunday of each month, we hold a seminar with Chef Hiro Nakano as our sake specialist. We are your neighborhood taco shop."

Hassan Mirjan of rezerv-it PHOTO BY JULIE JAYCOX

rezerv-it
524 Union St.
415-413-4700

Hasan Mirjan has a business idea right for the times. His rezerv-it provides space and resources to freelancers and self-employed people, who do not wish to work at home. The space also allows for an opportunity to meet and network with other people in different businesses and professions. Rezerv-it is an incubator providing start-up businesses with everything they need.

Mirjan was born into a family of entrepreneurs. He started his first two businesses — a chicken farm and a stationery store at age 20 in Iraq. In 1995, he emigrated to Canada, where he was employed in high-tech. In 2000, he came to the United States to work for several technology start-ups, including My Space and IGN. Last year, he moved to San Francisco and started rezerv-it.

The business works like this: Members pay for use of space and services by the day or the month (The monthly rate is $275 to $475) and have 24/7 access to the facility. Currently, the space is being used by a book

continued on page 11

Officer Crisp *continued from page 6*

team is on the scene offering services, which are usually declined. Another service Fred can call on is for a doctor, employed by the city, who will respond with a medical social worker. Only a doctor or a police officer can involuntarily commit a person. Fred does not resort to this before calling on Kristie Fairchild from North Beach Citizens. She invites them to the cozy North Beach Citizens storefront on Columbus for food, warmth and an offering of options.

Fred's day is usually spent responding to the following police calls: 800 - allegedly insane person, 811 - drunk person, and 915 - homeless person. He says all around San Francisco, over and over again, police are responding to these kinds of calls. He feels that the people he deals with have health issues, should be in custody, detoxed, sobered up and exposed to a rehabilitation program. He laments that since 1988, when crack came onto the streets, the County Jail in San Bruno is no longer available for chronic drunks who could be held after a second arrest in 30 days. Because selling crack is a felony, that jail is full of people with no hope of posting bail. In the past, chronic alcoholics could dry out there and have a chance to rehabilitate themselves.

To end our chat on a high note, I asked Fred about the best part of his job. Besides the fresh air and great exercise he enjoys on the bicycle, he riffed about how much more effective he is on his bike rolling through Washington Square, circling around to see who is on the benches, doing what, then cruising down Mason Street to peek inside a laundromat where homeless people can be found hanging around and not to do their laundry, then on down to the Wharf to see if panhandling is a visible aggravation. He rides up Telegraph Hill to cruise around the park, and down to Grant Avenue to chat with a few merchants. In Fred's opinion, an officer patrolling on a bicycle has a much more intimate pulse on what is going on than officers patrolling in a car. He can keep a better eye on illegal conduct such as drinking, fighting and panhandling.

I appreciate Fred's friendly and disarming presence. I feel that he makes North Beach a safer and decidedly more secure place to live.

OK, HILL DWELLERS, DO YOUR CIVIC (JURY) DUTY

By Ken Maley

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers, as an organization concerned with issues on our beloved Hill, has justifiably developed a reputation for civic mindedness throughout the city over the decades. As a former board member and fellow Hill dweller, I appeal to the THD membership to step up as individuals to perform another civic duty: volunteer for the Civil Grand Jury.

Our California founders were very aware — and concerned — with the performance of the government they were establishing through the state Constitution. In that document, each county is required to recruit volunteer citizens to form a Civil Grand Jury as watchdogs over government operations. Grand juries were given substantial powers to perform oversight, including subpoena powers. The jury is empowered to investigate any and all government business within its individual county. But, believe it or not, in San Francisco, a city with a renowned reputation for civic involvement, and almost everyone having something to say about almost every issue, recruiting 30 qualified volunteers has been a major challenge. Startlingly, in the past couple years, the court nearly failed to empanel a jury at all! How pathetic is that?

As a former juror, I must admit there is work involved — quite a bit of time is required to do a good job: weekly meetings for a year (June to July), investigating selected issues, negotiating with your fellow jurors on the issues to be researched, observing the confidentiality of the jury's activities, writing up the jury's findings. Yet, when your reports are issued, you have the satisfaction of having participated and contributed by performing your duty as a citizen watchdog to make our local government, its officers, departments and agencies more responsive and efficient.

The basic requirements to qualify for Civil Jury duty (and keep in mind this Jury is CIVIL not CRIMINAL) are citizenship, language skills, 18 years old, a city resident and no felony criminal record. Each year, the court seeks 30 prequalified volunteers, out of which 19 are randomly selected to serve as the jury. The remaining 11 are listed as alternates, if the jury drops below the 19 members required for a quorum.

To volunteer or find out more about the Civil Grand Jury, visit www.sfgov.org/courts, e-mail *ggubbini@sfc.org*, or call (415) 551-3605. Serving on the Civil Grand Jury is the opportunity to make an important difference, have a learning and rewarding experience. Deadline for applications is April 15 for the 2012-13 jury..

North Beach Business *continued from page 10*

publisher and a competitor of Air B&B, among others. Rezerv-it also hosts events and rents meeting space and technical assistance for presentations.

Mirjan says that "For people who have lost their job and want to become self-employed, rezerv-it offers a business address and a post office and provides a 'virtual office' with web and mobile application where they can check their mail, have it scanned and forwarded, or shredded."

He says that the neighborhood is friendly and supportive, and that people are beginning to find out about his business through word of mouth. Mirjan believes he, in turn, is contributing to the business health of North Beach." People who come to events at rezerv-it stay in the neighborhood to eat," he says.

Citizen Chain Cyclery
2064 Powell St.
796-2925

Co-Owner of Citizen Chain

One day, when Sasha Grigorovich-Barsky was attending Northeastern University in Boston, he found a rejected bicycle in a park and decided to fix it up. Shortly thereafter, he landed a job as a bicycle courier and became deeply enamored of bicycles and cycling culture. He gained a reputation for fixing bicycles, which led him to continue to seek work in the bicycle industry when he relocated to San Francisco.

Citizen Chain (pun intended) wants to be a neighborhood bicycle shop. Says Sasha, "We want to share our love of bicycles with you and want to encourage you to ride! We love selling bicycles for both economic and environmental reasons, but we have issue with the import of inexpensive bicycles made overseas. For this reason, we concentrate on repair. Many of the bicycles in local garages and sheds are good bikes that just need some attention and are worth repairing. We have an affinity for the craftsmanship of times past: hand-built frames (and in some cases parts) constructed by builders that have mastered their medium.

Citizen Chain bike shop: Sasha pictured

SASHA PHOTOS BY MIRIAM OWEN

"If you have an old bicycle sitting around and you have been procrastinating fixing it, bring it in! Ask us questions and we will be happy to help you however we can. We will fix things other shops can't."

RESTAURANT REVIEW

ONE COUPLE'S TASTE-FILLED DREAM COMES TRUE

BOTTLE CAP, Food and Drink
1707 Powell St., San Francisco
415-529-2237
By Carol Peterson

A year or so ago, when Liz Ferro, former food and beverage manager of the San Francisco Opera, and her husband Dane Boryta, who had worked as chef at such prestigious locations as Firefly and Zen, would walk past the padlocked Cobalt Restaurant — the former Washington Square Bar & Grill — they began to dream. "The empty restaurant was just a few blocks from our home and during these walks we came to understand that this was the place for us, we'd have a terrific restaurant right on Washington Square," Liz said.

But then there was the little problem of the lease. Ferro and Boryta didn't have deep pockets or monied backers. That's when the difficult economy may have come to their rescue. Boryta convinced a very accommodating landlord that, "It is better to have an open business than a closed museum" (like the former Washbag had become). The couple took on board their friend Pete Gowdy as bar manager. They had worked together for 15 years at Bruno's in the Mission. The deal was sealed and in two months, the blink of the eye in the restaurant industry, Bottle Cap opened. "It was not something we wanted to do, but we are a mom-and-pop operation and we needed to get started," Liz told me.

Our first stop at Bottle Cap was a casual drop in right after the opening. Sitting at the bar, we ordered from the Small Plates menu and chose a classic: the nostalgic Tomato Soup with a Grilled Cheese sandwich. Happily, this was not the Velveeta cheese and Campbell soup combo that my brother and I used to make. The brightly red bowl of soup popped with a flavor of tomatoes right from the garden and the cheese sandwich was grilled with creamy wagon wheel cheese. The soup is one of the best I have ever had.

On our return visit, we got down to business and sampled quite a few delicious dishes. Of the Starters, the knockout dish was the Fried Chicken Thighs. Dane wouldn't reveal the "secret" batter, but when the thighs arrived and we dipped them into the dill sauce, it didn't matter. The thighs were crispy on the outside and perfectly cooked and moist on the inside. I would put this dish on a par with the remarkable chicken we had at Thomas Keller's Ad Hoc restaurant in the wine country.

At Bottle Cap, Florence Henderson by Jason Mecier

There is another side dish, Cheesy Shells, so uniquely prepared, that its rather generic label does not do it credit. The shells come in a small bowl perfect for sharing. This dish consists of a perfect combination of Blue, Parmigian and White Cheddar Cheese, a bit of zest is added and there are bread crumbs on top. The flavors explode in your mouth.

My favorite entree was the sliced Grilled Sirloin Steak. Hen of the woods mushrooms and braised rapini beautifully complement the dish, but it was the celery root fritter that made it particularly special. Very few restaurants use this magnificent root vegetable with its subtle creamy taste, but no one does it better than Bottle Cap.

Often I have wondered why restaurants don't offer for dessert a simple slice of cake. To my surprise, Bottle Cap had one on its dessert menu. The cake is one high layer, filled discreetly with almond paste, giving it a moist and exquisite texture. When the menu said the dish was accompanied by mandarin oranges, I envisioned my mother's canned ones. But, of course, this isn't the way Dane does it. Instead, he serves small sections of sweet, fresh mandarin oranges.

The place is alive with live music, which is very refreshing in North Beach, as there are very few restaurants doing this. Also, they are open for brunch on Saturday and Sunday.

Liz Ferro is an extremely charming lady, with a commitment to making Bottle Cap the couple's own. She says, "When we first opened, people came in and said, 'Well, this doesn't look like the Washington Square Bar & Grill!' Well, no it isn't. The Washbag was three restaurants ago. They are gone and we are here, working 14-to-16 hours a day to establish ourselves, as one of the great new restaurants around the square. We don't have investors and Dane and I are trying to succeed with very hard work, good food, service and a friendly neighborhood atmosphere." I have a very firm opinion that they will do just that.

ARTISTS AND POETS JOIN TOGETHER TO PROTECT COIT TOWER AND ITS MURALS

By Gayle Leyton

On January 27, at Grant Avenue's Focus Gallery, poets, artists and activists gathered for a poetry reading by the Revolutionary Poets Brigade to motivate action to preserve and benefit Coit Tower. Organized by Gayle Leyton, Jack Hirschman and Jon Golinger, the event was born from the passion of those whose job is usually creating world peace, but who took a break in order to save and restore the people's murals at Coit Tower.

There was music by George Long on the clarinet and poems about Coit Tower composed for the event by Leyton, Hirschman, Bobby Coleman, Neeli Cherkovski, Dottie Payne, Rosemary Manno and Lincoln Bergman. The gallery was filled to capacity, and the readings received joyous, thunderous approval. Jessica Gottstein, great-granddaughter of Bernard Zakheim, one of the prominent Coit Tower muralists, represented her family and expressed her camaraderie with the energy and devotion of the poets and activists.

All in attendance agreed that the reverence which pervades the pristine atmosphere of a museum should be the same atmosphere that accompanies the WPA murals that encompass the Coit Tower lobby.

I have long-time memories of Coit Tower as a child growing up in San Francisco. There was always someone ready with a strong hand to hold; my grandfather on trips to the Children's Playground in Golden Gate Park**,** a boyfriend on midnight journeys on the 10 cent ferryboat ride to Oakland, and my father on Sunday trips to Coit Tower. My dad grasped my hand tightly so that we couldn't get too close to the murals. On every visit I remember seeing something new and wonderful. Each picture had a story, and my father provided exciting details.

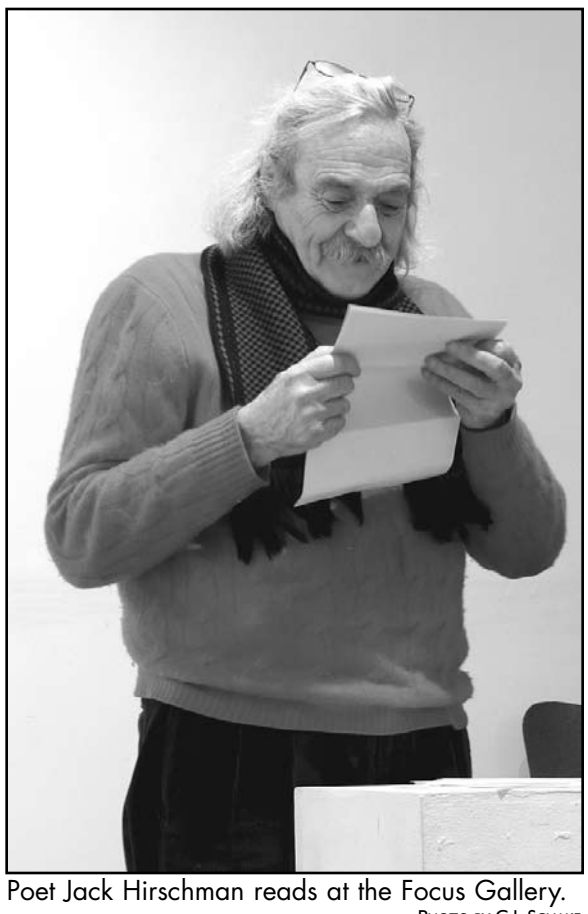
When I made recent visits to Coit Tower with a friend in October and December, and discovered the terrible condition of the murals, building and grounds, I was horrified, disappointed and angry. That experience compelled me to create "my e-mail rants to everyone in the world," which included a long list of San Francisco officials and agencies, national and local internet news bureaus, poets, artists and politicians.

The only person who called me was Jack Hirschman. As a major poet and resident of North Beach, he was concerned. I introduced Jack to Jon Golinger, president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, who was also concerned about the murals. The poetry reading took shape, organized by Jack with the participation of the Revolutionary Poets Brigade. I created e-mail flyers directed toward residents of North Beach and began an all-out effort to make citizens aware of the condition of the tower and the murals. Since the reading, interest in the issue has snowballed. Discovery of the neglect of the murals and landmark has gained attention from NPR, the Los Angeles Time, KQED Focus, the San Francisco Examiner and many other media outlets.

Meanwhile, on February 6, Golinger submitted 16,000 signatures to the city in support of a proposed ballot initiative which reads:

"It shall be the policy of the people of the City and County of San Francisco to protect Coit Tower and preserve the historic murals inside Coit Tower by strictly limiting commercial activities and private events at Coit Tower and by prioritizing the funds received by the city from any concession operations at Coit Tower for preserving the Coit Tower murals, protecting and maintaining the Coit Tower building and beautifying Pioneer Park around Coit Tower."

I believe the ballot initiative and the publicity are only the beginning. It is my hope that the images and lyrics of the poets at the Focus Gallery reading will echo into the streets and reach the people of San Francisco for whom Coit Tower has always been a beacon and symbol of the city. Let the renovation commence.



Poet Jack Hirschman reads at the Focus Gallery.
PHOTO BY C.J. SCHAKE

Oh, what a wonder Coit Tower

By Lincoln Bergman

Oh, what a wonder Coit Tower
Where WPA murals did flower
For their saving let's plan
Good folks of San Fran
For they represent people's power!

Coit Tower stands high in the sky
Inside great art meets the eye
For the murals we care
In their strength we all share
Save them our unified cry!
(or)
They've got power that no one can buy!

On the skyline Coit Tower still stands
On its walls working people grasp hands
Justice, peace, art, and freedom
Goddess knows how we need 'em
All over the world, in all lands!

The beautiful murals that meet us
In the tower some teens call Coit-us
We must make agitation
To fund preservation
Unified, no one can defeat us!

Zakheim, Arnautoff, all the rest
Were painting their absolute best
Their wonderful art
Is deep in our heart
This city has truly been blessed!
(or)
Solidarity is their bequest
(or)
Of time, their work stands the test!

A people's great treasure is Coit
With murals by painters adroit
They, I'm sure you'll agree,
Belong to the com-mun-i-ty
Art no one should ever exploit!

Yes, time does it work on all things
To rock, erosion it brings,
But we must do our part
To preserve this great art—
For Coit Tower, my heart truly sings!

PARKS, TREES & BIRDS REPORT

By Judy Irving

In late December, nine intrepid birdwatchers hiked around Telegraph Hill and the waterfront in search of birds to count and tally. Here's a report on THD's third annual "Audubon Christmas Bird Count," submitted by former Parks & Trees Committee Chair Joe Butler, who led the group:

Seeing the neighborhood from a bird's-eye view can be exhilarating. Combine that with a fine walk on a brisk clear day, your binoculars for a close-up view of colorful plumage and you have the makings of last year's Christmas Bird Count.

Katherine Petrin, Stan Teng, Joe Butler and six others counted birds on Telegraph Hill on December 27. The Golden Gate Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count is a same-day coast-to-coast census of the bird life in our communities.

Where would birds go in our neighborhood and where could we go to count them? We thought of places where stairs, plants and trees take the place of endless curbs, where the hill is too steep for paving. Every street eventually has a dead end, such as Green Street, which ends at a cliff, Filbert, which descends on wooden stairs, and Montgomery Street, where fine plantings in its median strip made great spots to watch and count birds.

Pioneer Park is another excellent location: The five-acre park had 12 native plant species in a 1995 species inventory, and California native replantings since then have tripled that number. The birds took notice. Increased food sources from both seeds and native insects encouraged by the oak trees are an outgrowth of the replanting scheme.

To find plant species is also a way to find bird species. The Coyote Brush has a billion seeds that last on the ground into winter, attracting Thrushes and Juncos, while the tiny Anna's Hummingbird is devoted to nectar plants with showy colored blossoms. Like the Townsend's and Yellow-Rumped Warblers, it also loves the flowers of the crowning Eucalyptus around Coit Tower. The trees are more famously known for the Cherry-Headed Conures, the "Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill"; all were seen in a riot of calls and feathers with flashes of red and yellow.

Throughout the day, we spotted more than 700 birds of 35 different species. If you would like to help with our count next Christmas Week, let Judy Irving know and get out that book and binoculars!

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THE TELEGRAPH HILL VIE BOHEME

THE HESLETS OF GREENWICH STREET

*This is the second of three installments drawn from an unpublished chapter in Mark Bittner's "*The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill." *The first installment described the complicated relationship between Desmond and Valetta Heslet and Valetta's mother, Grace Marchant, she of the world famous Grace Marchant Garden on the Filbert Steps. The final installment will tell the story of the Heslet's garden on the Greenwich Steps, which, as Mark says, "ultimately brought the parrots to Telegraph Hill."*

Next-door to the Heslets' new home was a compound of old shacks. The property looked something like a child's set of wooden blocks: The buildings sat next to and on top of each other in a seemingly haphazard way. It was a maze that you could get lost in. Everything was dilapidated. None of the buildings had foundations; outhouses were the norm. There was one long barrack-like structure, but all the others were cabins that had been subdivided. There was room for a bed and a dresser, but little more. The units were so small that Desmond referred to them as "stalls." He said it was Grace who came up with the idea that the three of them should lease the Compound and run it themselves. The owner, a Mr. Meyer, went along with the idea on the condition that they not kick out any of his tenants, who were all single workingmen.

Valetta

Meyer ended up selling the property to the Heslets, who began a major rebuilding project with Desmond supplying the money and Valetta and Grace the labor. Whenever side-by-side units became vacant, they'd enlarge them by tearing out the dividing wall. They installed toilets, windows and new wiring. Because their own cottage was too ramshackle to be saved, Desmond, Valetta and Grace moved into the Compound and started scavenging pieces of their old home. Grace found a source of bricks and became obsessed with building fireplaces, putting them wherever she could fit one. To give the Compound an identity, they painted the buildings black with white trim. All the renovations were improvised, based on whatever materials they had at hand. They did them without bothering to get permits, which was an old tradition on Telegraph Hill. The buildings they were fixing up had been constructed by the same methods. Desmond called it "bootleg architecture." Even with the improvements, conditions remained primitive. They didn't see the need for luxuries, and referred derisively to people who wanted them as "steamheaters."

In Telegraph Hill's history, there had already been two properties called "The Compound." In both cases, the tenants had been primarily Bohemian. (Bohemian means different things to different people. I use it to mean someone with intellectual or artistic inclinations, who prefers living an interesting life to pursuing money.) The Heslet property became the third Compound. The Heslets were 1930s Bohemians. It was the Great Depression and people at the fringe often had Marxist or anarchist tendencies. Despite having been crushed by the government, the Industrial Workers of the World (the IWW, or the "Wobblies") was still a strong influence within Bohemian and intellectual circles on the West Coast. But the Heslets weren't that extreme. They and their tenants were primarily Roosevelt Democrats and vocal in their contempt for Republicans. Desmond and Valetta rented to different types, but most tenants gravitated toward show business or the arts. There were seven buildings in the Compound, and although individual units were not as small as before, most of the buildings contained more than one apartment. There were at least 18 living spaces, and the various locations gradually acquired names: the Cave of the Winds, the Fishbowl, the Bypass, Catfish Row, the Rabbit Hutch, the Mole Hole, the Cavern, the Penthouse, the Outpost and Rotten Row. Tenants called themselves Compounders. They had a wide range of interests and skills, and taught each other. Desmond once wrote that in the Compound one could learn music, drama, art, folk and tap dancing, masonry, plumbing, dead Indian languages, math, cooking and gardening.

Valetta especially liked taking up new studies. When two musicians moved in next-door, she renewed her interest in the piano. Music always played an important role at the Compound. She had two pianos — one, a Steinway baby grand, which must have required a Herculean effort to haul down the Greenwich Steps. The Compound gained a reputation among touring classical musicians as a friendly outpost and some gave private performances there. One tenant was a pupil of composer Darius Milhaud. Valetta learned leather tooling and folk dancing from two of her tenants. She studied mathematics with another, anthropologist and linguist Jaime de Angulo, who, at the time, was royalty within Bohemian circles. Not one to be left out, Grace learned to make pottery and jewelry. Desmond painted and sketched. The Compound threw a lot of parties, but they were much different than the parties people go to nowadays. Instead of sitting around eating, drinking and making small talk, the Compounders staged their own plays and threw dances. More people took the time to learn to play an instrument back then, so whenever music was needed at a party, the Compounders played it themselves. There were wild parties with people roaming from apartment to apartment and drinking into the wee hours.

Desmond

Valetta occasionally put out a mimeographed newsletter for current and former Compounders. Reading it, you see that they were in each other's lives constantly. There was always someone to talk to you and you didn't have to call first; you could just drop in. It wasn't a big deal when one Compounder walked in on another's dinner party and asked to use the bathtub. They celebrated holidays and birthdays together, told stories and became friends. All of this existed because the Heslets didn't care about money. I don't think they were doctrinaire non-materialists; they simply didn't see money as something important. You made the minimum you needed to be able to spend time doing what you loved. Rents were low and the Heslets were reluctant to raise them. Some Compounders, when they could afford to, took it upon themselves to raise their own. Rooms almost became the possession of those who lived in them. In one case, a woman moved away, leaving her place to a friend. Later, when the friend moved and someone else wanted to rent it, Valetta felt obliged to check with the original tenant to make sure it was OKwith her. She'd been gone for 15 years.

World War II brought an end to the party. Most of the men entered the military. Desmond became a cartographer in the Army and was stationed in Oregon and then in Guam. Valetta and Grace both worked in the Marin shipyards, Valetta as a welder and Grace was a riveter. Throughout the war, the Compound housed military personnel, one of whom was Byron White, who later become a U.S. Supreme Court justice. Once the war was over, and not having any of their old tenants to displace, Desmond and Valetta made changes to the largest of the seven buildings, the one called Rotten Row. Originally a three-room barrack-like structure, they tore out walls, added one entire new room, and added onto another. This was to be their home for the rest of their lives. Their lifestyle changed. They were older now and not so wild. They still hosted music concerts, but the focus of the Compound changed. A new project got under way — one that would ultimately bring the parrots to the hill.

VOICES SPEAK UP FOR A 'NEW' BROADWAY

By Mike Madrid

Broadway has had its ups and downs in recent years. Many of the restaurants and live music establishments that attracted North Beach locals are gone, replaced by nightclubs that cater to the bridge-and-tunnel set. The crowds that swarm Broadway on weekend nights bring drugs, crime and violence. While an increased police presence has helped manage the weekend crowds, the situation reached a peak last September when two officers attempted to apprehend an armed drug dealer and two bystanders were shot. This level of violence is not a weekly occurrence, but North Beach residents regularly deal with these noisy, aggressive crowds that disturb the peace, cause property damage and engage in lewd activities.

It's no surprise that many North Beach residents avoid Broadway. There were some attempts last year to open more upscale venues there that would attract a North Beach and Financial District clientele. Owners quickly learned, however, that locals avoid Broadway because of its dangerous reputation. In general, Broadway business owners say that they are struggling to keep their doors open and must rely on the nightclub crowds to stay in business. To deal with this situation, these business owners have formed Voice of Broadway, with the goal of "rebranding" the street as a center for nightlife, entertainment and dining for San Franciscans and tourists. Working with the Entertainment Commission, Voice of Broadway hopes to move away from the nightclub scene and the complications that these venues have brought to the street.

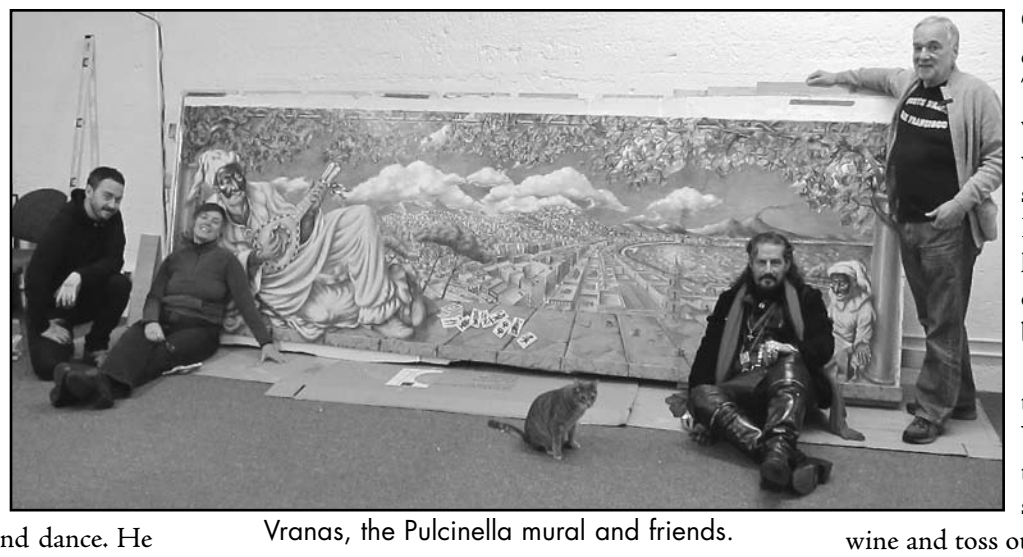
At a November 16 community meeting, Voice of Broadway representatives asked North Beach residents to be patient during this transition. The main thing that residents asked was that these Broadway business owners treat the neighborhood with respect and adhere to the Entertainment Commission's Good Neighbor policy, which states that venues must post signs that urge patrons to "leave the establishment in a quiet, peaceful and orderly fashion." As of February 1, such signs had still not been posted. The most sobering comments of the evening came from Rudy Corpuz, a representative of United Playaz, a youth leadership organization, who strongly advised business owners and residents to resolve the problems on Broadway before gangs move in and establish it as their turf.

What the future holds for Broadway remains to be seen, but clearly the community needs to have a voice in determining that future to ensure a safe environment for everyone.

MIRACLE OF THE MURAL

By Sali Mour

On Oct. 22, 2009, a ceremony took place at Pulcinella restaurant honoring Varanus, the muralist and portrait painter, who, after three months work, had completed the restaurant's mural of Naples, featuring the clown Pulcinella. Supervisor David Chiu presented Vranus with a certificate of honor for his work. Unfortunately, Luigi Pucci's excellent restaurant did not make it, a victim of the economic times. What was to become of the mural? This is the story of the mural's rescue.



Vranas, the Pulcinella mural and friends.

Pulcinella is a clown, beloved in Naples. He loves music, mischief, song and dance. He wears a mask over his long, pointed nose. His name came from the small, edgy Italian chickens with the same long nose. His image was front and center on the Vallejo Street restaurant's mural.

Vranas is from Egypt and Greece. He has lived in San Francisco since the 1980s. He paints portraits of street people as well as murals. Now, with the fate of the Pulcinella mural in limbo, he is searching for a permanent home for the piece where the public can enjoy it. But he has work to do in Egypt, which needs his talent, but so does North Beach.

Mark Alvarez, a North Beach beat cop, knows Vranas well. One day, walking by neighborhood storefronts, he noticed a large, brilliantly colored painting stashed in the corner of the now closed restaurant. He calls Vranas and John Mola, director of Giani TV, another friend of Vranas. The two are there in 10 minutes. Lapo, one of the directors of Emerald Table Gallery, also shows up. The mural has been hacked out of the wall.

One corner of it is in pieces. The three men repair it, a slow and exasperating task. **Sean O'Donnell,** our local handyman, also pitches in. Lapo goes to Focus Gallery to borrow John Parino's push cart. The cart is only 3 1/2 feet long. The mural is 13 feet of wood and canvas. People on Columbus Avenue stop to watch. Traffic stops. It is a Fellini film, a slow procession to the Emerald Tablet. Finally, the mural is lodged against a high white wall at the gallery. The movers discuss the next step. The mural has become a community project.

Dela Heywood, Lapo's partner at the Emerald, Lapo, Vranas, John Mola, **Wayne Harkness** and **Diedre English**, the latter two also supporters of Vranas, sit at the Emerald Tablet. They drink wine and toss out ideas, Energy builds. What about an auction to sell the mural? The idea of the money they can raise lights up the room like a neon sign. They agree the mural needs to be in a public place.

The Italian American Bldg., someplace outdoors, the local public library, Coppola's vineyard or the Italian American Museum. These are all rich ideas. What about an auction to sell the mural? The team agrees it will happen. A place and time are still to be decided. Check the THD website and neighborhood scuttlebutt for details.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP—TO MARIN

By Dick Boyd

It's easy to be seduced by the lure of "Marvelous Marin." I know, because it's happened to me -- twice.

The first time I left the city for San Anselmo was in the late 1940s. For a few years, I had a great time at Max Friedman's Marin Town and Country Club up in Fairfax, and other places now mostly gone. By the late '50s, however, the lure of these haunts had worn off and I returned to the city where I remained —with a stopover in Hawaii — until 2011.

Now I am back in San Anselmo. Why? Two reasons: One, I found a place where I can and do have a dog. Two, I have an alter ego that too often says to me, "Things have been going pretty well for you, Dick, it's time you made a bad decision." Right off, I knew I had made a big mistake. I tried to get out of my lease. No luck. I arrived here on Nov. 2, 2011 and my landlord tells me I will be free to leave on Nov. 3, 2012.

If you are planning a move across the bridge, let me give you a head's up. You will not be able to walk. You will, for sure, need a car. In North Beach, walking was a big part of my life. Way back in the '60s when I owned Pierre's, I would walk regularly to work down Grant from Union to the club at 546 Broadway. In recent times, I got in the habit of taking a regular walk down to the Beat Museum to check out how my book, "Broadway North Beach: The Golden Days,'' was doing. From there I'd walk back for a leisurely breakfast at Café Divine. From my place on Vanderveer, I could easily walk to Safeway, Walgreen's and Trader Joe's.

That's not the way Marin works. From my apartment I can see the Red Rock Shopping Center less than 400 yards away. But there is no way I can walk there. If I want a tube of toothpaste, I'll need to get in my car and drive what seems like about a mile to get to the shopping center. Yes, There is a Trader Joe's over here — it's only a 10-mile drive down the road.

Sure there are buses, but none of them make the frequent, friendly and essential neighborhood stops that North Beach residents have become accustomed to with Muni lines 8 and 39. Then there's the cab service. Back in the neighborhood, if I had, say, a medical appointment, I would leave my Vanderveer digs, walk down to Bay Street, and pick up a cab in minutes — if not seconds. In Marin, so far. I have seen one cab. The driver was waiting patiently for a very old lady while she picked up her prescriptions.

In North Beach, Washington Square was my hangout. I never tired of the diversity: Chinese women doing their tai chi, dogs in pursuit of balls, the friendly drunks. Over here, the dog-run down the street is all that passes for open space. I enjoy dogs, but I'd rather be bantering with the black musician I came to call the "Guitar Man."

Finally, there's the food. I'll admit to being a Caesar's kind of guy. A hamburger there for me is worth 3 1/2 stars. The only place over here in the Caesar's league is Marin Joe's. Word has recently reached us, however, that Original Joe's has reopened to raves on Washington Square. I have a date in March to go over to the city and check it out. But the date I am really looking forward to is Nov. 3, 2012, when I'll be leaping back to the good life and the place I want to be.

THD BOARD MOTIONS

FOR THE MONTHS OF OCT. 2011-JAN. 2012

October 2011:

Motion: Telegraph Hill Dwellers is concerned that major policy issues regarding protection and enhancement of our public open space have been left undefined, unaddressed or inappropriately skewed toward commercialization in the current draft Revisions to the Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE), and request a new public comment period on the next draft of the ROSE document. (Passes unanimously.)

November 2011:

No motions

December 2011:

No Board meeting

January 2012:

Motion: Stan Hayes is officially appointed to the THD Board for a term lasting until April 2013. (Passes unanimously)

Motion: The 2012 THD Nominating Committee will consist of Katz, Petrin and Puri selected by the Board and Sanchez and Noyes appointed by President Golinger. (Passes Unanimously.)

Motion: THD supports the protection of Coit Tower and the preservation of the historic murals inside Coit Tower by strictly limiting commercial activities and private events at Coit Tower and by prioritizing the funds received by the city from any concession operations at Coit Tower for preserving the Coit Tower murals, protecting and maintaining the Coit Tower building and beautifying Pioneer Park around Coit Tower. (Passes with 2 abstentions.)

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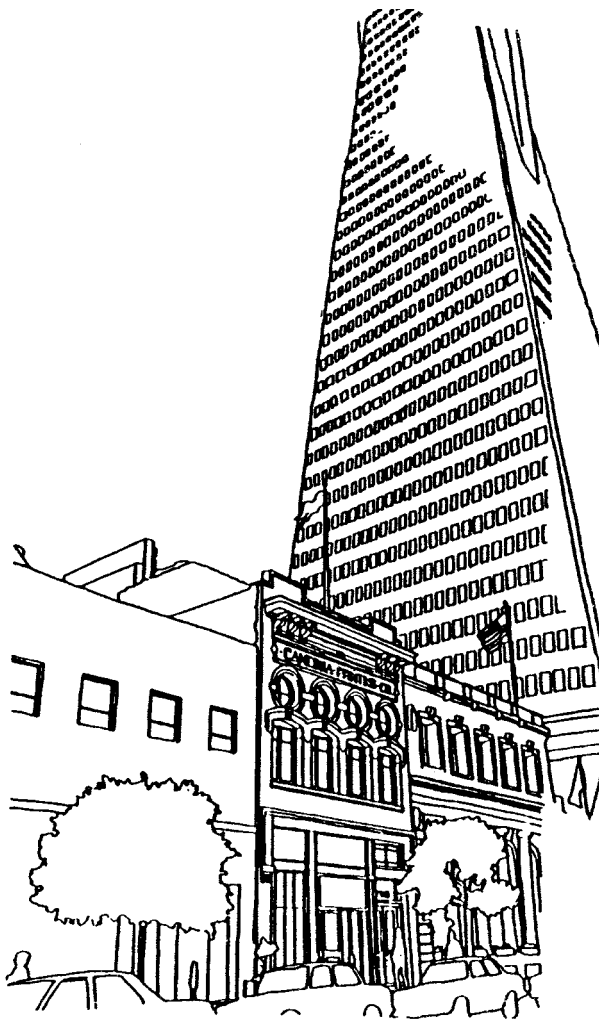

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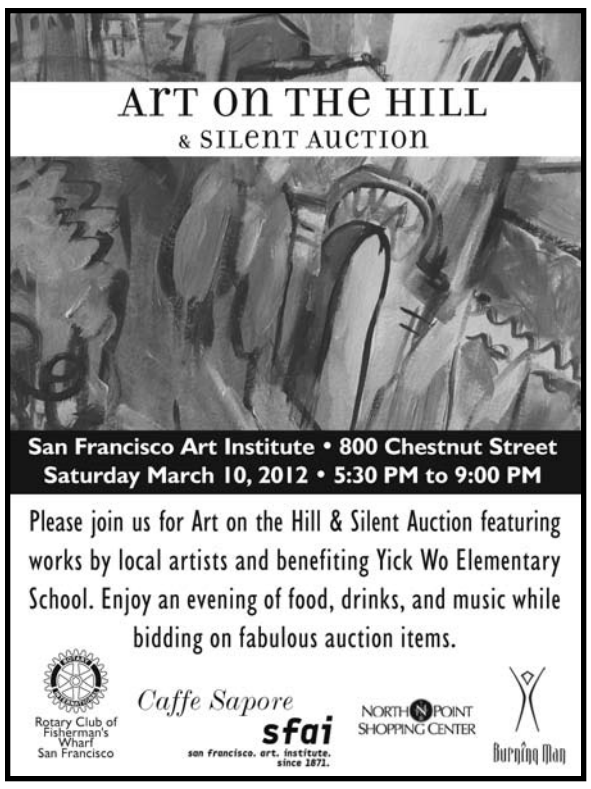

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THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Contact a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET: Chair Tom Noyes. Contact Tom at Tom.Noyes@thd.org

MEMBERSHIP: Chair Chris Stockton. Contact Chris at Chris.Stockton@thd.org

SEMAPHORE: Editor Art Peterson. Contact Art at Art.Peterson@thd.org

PARKS, TREES & BIRDS: Chair Judy Irving. Promotes projects to support neighborhood parks, green spaces, street trees, and birds. Contact Judy at Judy.Irving@thd.org

PARKING & TRANSPORTATION: Chair Mike Sonn. Supports efforts to ease congestion, optimize neighborhood parking, and enhance public transit. Contact mike.sonn@thd.org

PLANNING & ZONING: Co-Chairs Nancy Shanahan & Mary Lipian. Reviews and monitors proposed development projects for consistency with applicable laws and neighborhood character. Contact Nancy at Nancy.Shanahan@thd.org or Mary at Mary.Lipian@thd.org

SOCIAL & PROGRAM: Co-Chairs Lynn Sanchez & Merle Goldstone. Organizes neighborhood social events, group dinners, and quarterly membership meetings.

Contact Lynn at Lynn.Sanchez@thd.org or Merle at Merle.Goldstone@thd.org

WATERFRONT: Works to enhance and protect our unique and historic waterfront.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

ART & CULTURE: Chair Julie Jaycox. Organizes events and projects that celebrate the art and humanities of our neighborhood. Contact Julie at Julie.Jaycox@thd.org

COMMUNICATIONS: Chair Jon Golinger. Contact Jon at Jon.Golinger@thd.org

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: Director, Carlo Arreglo. Contact Carlo at Carlo.Arreglo@thd.org

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

COALITION FOR SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOODS: Gerry Crowley. Contact Gerry at gerrycrowley@aol.com

NORTHEAST WATERFRONT ADVISORY GROUP: Jon Golinger. Contact Jon at Jon.Golinger@thd.org

WEB SITE = www.thd.org

Visit the THD website to explore a wealth of neighborhood history and get the latest information about what's happening on the Hill.

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Schedules of Committee Meetings

PLANNING & ZONING: Last Thursdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

Look to the THD website for information on THD events. **Log on to http://www.thd.org**

List of new members and former members who have rejoined since Issue 196, Fall 2011:
Virginia Handley, Erin Hill, Brenda & George Jewett, Michele Liapes, Connie Hills & Julie Nicholson, Carla & Philip Reed, Hwee See Teng & Edward Stadum

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE _____EMAIL: _____

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Individual $30___ Household $45__ Senior (age 65 and over) $20__ Senior Household $35___

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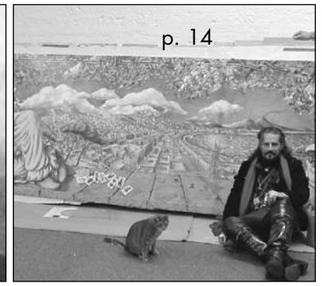

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Grant Avenue Denizens

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